

25 Years of Cruising

By: Staff Commodore Llew Goodfield

Marilyn and I began cruising in the mid 70's aboard our San Juan 24 in San Francisco Bay. We had a wonderful time exploring Pier One, Angel Island, Jack London Square, San Pablo Bay and the Petaluma River. Destination possibilities were endless and the sailing challenging. Our tender little San Juan had a perpetual reef in the main. Our son Graham was a seasoned sailor even before he was born in Greenbrae in 1978. In 1980 we moved home to Carpinteria and immediately began exploring the Channel Islands, still in our San Juan. One of our biggest challenges was finding fresh water. Our boat capacity was five gallons so we quickly became knowledgeable about which creeks flowed though the summer and where the best bathing pools were. Graham was usually the lookout for his Mother and Sisters. He delighted in shouting 'someone's coming' and watching them panic. Marilyn packed two ice chests with food and ice. One of the chests was taped shut and wasn't opened until our second week. We cooked on what was called a "Scotch Box". It was a barbeque shaped like a tool box and burned charcoal. Our "head" was a porta poti and Dad was forever amazed how, as many as five family members could disappear on that small boat when it came time to empty it. In 1983 our family was anchored in Pelican. The Harbor was crowded and there was a small ketch with three people aboard close by. One of those people was a black fellow who described himself as a 'deckhand who had boarded the boat in Ensenada'. He said his name was "Angel" and hung around our boat, showing more interest in our teenage daughter, Arlene, than I was comfortable with. He invited us to attend a party on another boat the next night. The next morning I pulled up anchor and moved to Fry's where we stayed several more days before returning to Santa Barbara Harbor. When I checked in with the Harbor Patrol for a guest slip, the Patrolman pointed out the same boat "Angel" had been aboard that they had impounded. Turned out "Angel" had attacked a woman at the party he'd invited us to and was arrested by the Coast Guard with a helicopter. On investigation they discovered he was Kevin Cooper, an escaped prisoner from Chino who had murdered a family of five in Chino on his way to Ensenada.

In 1987 we bought a Catalina 34, named it Gypsea and joined the Yacht Club, just before the annual cruise to Catalina. We thought Gypsea was palatial after our San Juan and started off for Catalina with the boat manual in hand. Al and Ruth Topping were Cruise Chairpersons that year and we were instructed to join up with the Cruise in Avalon. There was no mention of special arrangements Staff Commodore Bill Underwood had made for certain of his buddies at Cherry Cove on the first night. It turned out there were moorings for more of us and Al attempted to contact us by radio as we sailed past the Isthmus. Never having cruised with a group before, we didn't know to keep our radio on so we passed right on by and ended up anchoring that night in 90 feet of water off White's. After a great week in Avalon the cruise left for San Diego. On the trip down, this time with our radio on, we were frequently contacted by Charley and Joan Watson who routinely mentioned they were enjoying their hot tub and billiard table in their Catalina 27 "Eclipse". They also introduced us to water balloons. We had so much fun we were hooked on cruising with the Yacht Club. We still felt like newcomers when Commodore Bill Deardorff appointed us Cruise Chairpersons in 1989. Marilyn and I determined to continue the usual Cruise destinations but we wanted to introduce the Club to some new spots we had discovered on our own. The first of these was Scorpion Ranch on the East end of Santa Cruz. There had always been a large, forbidding, and effective sign on the beach that said PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO LANDING. Scorpion was run by a friend of ours named Jaret Owens, who leased it from Francis Gherini. We made arrangements with Jaret for a nature hike and barbeque ashore. There was no landing dock then and it took all our Members' skill to get our dinghys ashore, mostly dry. Stan Darrow, Jr. was a tremendous help with his open power boat ferrying people back and forth. Another first for our cruisers that year was to Christy Ranch, at the West end of Santa Cruz. Christy was under lease by a Camarillo airline that landed on a strip in the canyon East of the Ranch. Marilyn and I arranged with the Airline to meet our members on the beach at Forney's in pick-up trucks with bench seats in the back. The pick-ups took us to the Ranch where a Naturalist gave us a tour of the buildings and put on a barbeque. Great fun; we had Island Foxes eating out of our hands throughout the evening.

In 1992, to our amazement, Commodore Ed Marini appointed us Cruise Chairpersons again. We decided to do Christy Ranch again. This time the Ranch was under lease by the SB Museum of Natural History and the Director, Dennis Powers and his wife Leslie were, and still are Members. We decided to go all out and flew Robert Serichi, our Manager, and our own chef out to the Ranch. The pick-up trucks met us at Forney's again and drove us to the Ranch. On the way a woman in our truck commented she'd like to see a wild pig up close. The driver, Keith Herold, stopped and our son Graham and a friend of his jumped out and ran down a baby pig. They brought it back to the truck to show the woman and she wouldn't get near it. The meal was wonderful and because of Dennis and Leslie's efforts, it was one of our best cruises. In 1999, Honorary SBYC Member and Director of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Marla Daily, told us that the last of the saddle horses were being removed from Santa Rosa Island aboard Vaquero II. Marilyn and I suggested to the Fleet Captain that we take a Cruise to Santa Rosa for a tour of the Ranch and to watch the horses loaded. Nita Vail, of the family that once owned the Island, and Marla, met us at the Ranch Headquarters and led our group on a tour of the buildings. We had cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on the lawn in front of the Ranch House that evening and Nita told us her family's history on the Island. Early next morning the Cowboys herded the horses to the pier where they boarded Vaquero II with a clatter and settled down for their passage to Port Hueneme. It was quite a sight and all our Cruisers agreed it was worth every bit of the effort to be witnesses to history.